



# Raider Review



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## Inside the Raider Review



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U.S. Army photo by Maj. David Olson

**Getting ready to roll...** Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Bullock, the personal security detachment platoon sergeant for the 1st BCT commander, 4th Inf. Div., briefs the troops from the PSD on the route to Forward Operating Base Falcon during a convoy brief held in front of the brigade tactical operation center on Camp Taji, Iraq.

## Restored power supply restores new Iraqi faith

By Spc. C. Terrell Turner  
*Staff Writer*

**T**he residents of a local township in the Taji area have an "enlightened" new picture of Iraq infrastructure repair as the Abu Jedral Electrical Project restored

electricity to their neighborhood.

The opening ceremony on March 29 took place in front of members of the neighborhood and the North Khadimiya Nahia or local city council, with Coalition forces and the Iraqi army in attendance. Civil Affairs units work with nahias to help actualize their

plans and proposals, helping with governance issues, measuring feasibility and to see if funding is available.

"This is the culmination of 14 months of labor," said Capt. Christian Blanding, civil affairs team leader, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade (go to page 14, project) —

# Great progress in GWOT being made in lethal, non-lethal arenas

By Col. James Pasquarette  
Commander, 1st BCT

**S**oldiers of the Raider Brigade – Happy Easter! Time continues to fly by.

As I write this on April 17, we are at the three month point from our transfer of authority with 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division. We have been deployed away from home for over four months – which means we are already one-third of the way through this deployment. We are really making some progress in some tough areas of Iraq.

I continue to see real progress across the Raider Brigade area of operation. Company A, 1st Bn., 66th



Armored Regiment continues to make a big difference in Tarmiya in conjunction with their brothers from 2nd Mech. Battalion, 1st Brigade, 9th IA Division. This operation could not be going any better. Troop B, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment continues to work hard with the Estonian Platoon and elements from 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div., in Saab Al Bour. I believe this complex town will begin to see the fruits of our labor in the very near future. For operational security reasons, I won't talk about future operations. I will say that I like what is happening in these two towns. I want to continue to get better integrated / imbedded with the Iraqi people to gain their trust and confidence that we are committed to making their future brighter.

The last week or so has been difficult as we have lost three Soldiers and have had three others seriously wounded. One of the biggest challenges of command is to deal with the loss of that in which you love – your Soldiers. The loss of a single life

is a tragedy to the loved ones it affects – it changes their lives forever. The solace I seek to embrace is the belief that their sacrifice will make our world a better place for our children. It helps me deal with this loss – and gives me renewed strength and focus on the task at hand. I ask all of you that have been affected by our losses recently to reflect on this – and not to lose focus on what is in front of us.

Here are a couple of observations from my circulation around the FOB and our battlespace. First, I am very happy with the effects we are having at the battalion and company levels. As stated above, we are making some great progress – especially in the non-lethal arenas. I am particularly impressed with how the company commanders are able to operate effectively across lethal and non-lethal lines of operation. A concern I have, however, is that we have slipped at the platoon level with regard to preparation and execution of tasks. I attribute a good bit of this to a lack of (go to page 5, PCC)

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# Pre-combat checks on SAW vital

By Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Wells  
*Command Sergeant Major, 1st BCT*

All right Soldiers; listen up. You have about two hours before going out on a combat patrol. Your sergeant holds a formation, gives you the Warning Order and starts walking down the line checking cleanliness and serviceability of weapons. You instantly start sweating, even though it's only 78 degrees. He stands in front of you, takes your weapon, looks down and inspects your SAW. He suddenly raises his



head and looks like a gorilla in the advanced stages of 'Roid Rage.' He starts screaming at you and smells of Old Spice, coffee and impending doom. You can even see his head to starting to split open to unleash Thor's Hammer. What can you do to prevent this from ever happening again?

First of all, you know it's your responsibility to have your SAW clean and serviceable at all times. And just to let you know, we hold your team leader and squad leader accountable for the state of readiness of our Soldiers, weapons and the equipment assigned to them. Believe me, the platoon sergeant will not think twice about running a saber through your sergeant if he fails a Pre-Combat Inspection. That's why you see the platoon sergeant conducting spot checks before the final inspection. He'd rather scuff your sergeant up and square him away before the platoon leader steps out in front of the

platoon to inspect. So, let's start cleaning your SAW.

First you clear, then disassemble the SAW into the eight major groups (operating rod, barrel, handguard, buttstock and buffer, trigger, gas cylinder, bipod, receiver). Then you continue to break down the assemblies. Refer to TM 9-1005-201-10. Do not remove the extractor or the extractor pin.

Start with cleaning the bore and chamber using CLP and fresh swabs. I use the bore brush and patches for the SAW's bore and the chamber brush and small square pieces of a clean rag to clean the bore chamber.

Clean the gas regulator with the scraper tool. Remove all that crusty-ass carbon. The gas regulator gets fouled up quickly thru regular use. If you don't clean the regulator you'll definitely have a sluggish firing rate, it won't feed properly, may not extract (go to page 5, CLP)

## Pfc. Tharp remembered at Memorial

By Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt  
*Editor, Raider Review*

A Memorial Ceremony was held for a Soldier at Forward Operating Base Falcon, southeast of Baghdad, who was killed while on patrol, April 1.

Pfc. Sean Douglas Tharp, an infantryman from Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th

Infantry Division died March 28 when he was mortally wounded by enemy fire.

"Pfc. Tharp was a silent warrior and it seems unjust that he is not here today," said Capt. Matthew Weber, who spoke of Tharp at the ceremony. "Everything Tharp was taught, he would write down in his green leader book. He would consume himself with everything he could learn about being a Soldier, an infantryman and a RTO

[radio transmission operator]. In two months, he filled-up about three leader books.

"Private first class Sean Tharp is no longer with us, but he will remain forever alive in our thoughts and memories," Weber added. "Allow the memory of Pfc. Tharp to make you a stronger person and Soldier."

Tharp was born on Aug. 21, 1984, in Orlando, Fla. He entered the United States Army on May 17,

2005, and graduated from Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Benning, Ga. Upon graduation from AIT, Tharp was assigned to Co. B, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army (go to page 4, regular)

# Raider Brigade Chaplain corner: *Durer's, 'The Praying Hands'*

By Chaplain (Maj.) Steve Feriante  
*1st BCT Chaplain*

**B**ack in the 15th century, in a village near Nuremberg, lived a family with 18 children. 18! In order merely to keep food on the table the father, a goldsmith, worked 18-hours a day and any other paying chore he could find.

Despite their hopeless condition, two of Albrecht Durer's children had a dream. Both wanted to pursue their talent for art, but knew full well their father would never be able to send either of them to Nuremberg to study at the academy.

The boys worked out a pact. They would toss a coin. The loser would go down into the mines and, with his earnings, support his brother while he attended the academy. After four years, they would trade places. Albrecht Durer won the toss and went off to Nuremberg.

Albert went down into the dangerous mines and, for the next



Albrecht Durer's, "The Praying Hands."

four years, financed his brother, whose work at the academy was an immediate sensation. Albrecht's etchings, woodcuts and oils were masterworks of beauty of perfection.

When Albrecht returned to his village, the Durer family held a festive dinner to celebrate his triumphant homecoming. Albrecht rose and said, "Albert, blessed brother of mine, now

it is your turn. Now you can go to Nuremberg to pursue your dream, and I will take care of you."

Albert, tears streaming down his pale face, sobbed and repeated, over and over, "No... no... no... no." "No, brother, I cannot go to Nuremberg. It is too late for me. Look, look what four years in the mines have done to my hands. The bones in every finger have been smashed at least once, and lately I have been suffering from arthritis so badly I can not even hold a glass. No, brother... for me it is too late."

More than 450 years have passed. Albrecht Durer's hundreds of masterpieces hang in every great museum in the world. But the odds are great that you are familiar with only one of Albrecht Durer's works.

To pay homage to Albert for all he sacrificed, Albrecht Durer drew his powerful drawing, "Hands," but the entire world opened their hearts to his great masterpiece and renamed his tribute of love "The Praying Hands." Take a second look. No one, ever, makes it alone.

## 'Regular' Soldier was a silent warrior

(continued from page 3)  
Service Ribbon and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

"We are here today to honor the memory of Pfc. Sean Tharp," said Sgt. Jason Gibson, Tharp's supervisor. "For those of you who remember Pfc. Tharp, there are tons and tons of memories. Tharp was a warrior who went above and beyond

his job every time. On the 28th of March 2006, I had the honor of leading Pfc. Tharp on his last patrol.

"As we walked through an alley, Tharp told me I'm with you sergeant, I'm with you all the way. Where ever you go, I go," Gibson continued. "Less than ten minutes later, Pfc. Tharp died on the battlefield serving his country. But if I could say one

more thing to Tharp, I would say to him that no matter where I go your stories and the memories I have of you will go with me. Anybody that will listen to me talk, they will know about you."

Tharp is survived by his mother, Teresa Tharp of Orlando, Fla., and his father, Kurt Mickle of Edmond, Okla.

# PCC, PCI affects mission readiness

—(continued from page 2) proper pre-combat checks at the crew level and a lack of pre-combat inspections as the platoon level. I know for a fact it is not happening to standard across the brigade.

Failure to conduct PCCs and PCIs to standard adversely affects mission accomplishment and increases risk to our Soldiers. I have asked CSM Wells to get into this. He is organizing a patrol “revalidation” training program that will begin in early May. PCC/PCI will

be a big part of this training program, but it will also address react to IED TTP, detainee point of capture TTP, night vision device operation, and other areas – based on lessons learned to date by experts in our formations.

I ask platoon leaders, platoon sergeants and first line leaders to work between now and the beginning of this training to fix any shortfalls in your respective platoons.

Finally, I want to thank you for the hard work and devotion to duty I continue

to witness every day as I walk around the FOB or conduct a patrol in our battlespace. I read the Sensing Session results and know not every Soldier is ecstatic with life over here. This isn’t Fort Hood – we have a mission at hand which requires all to sacrifice a little. We are a ground combat brigade – we are different than other brigades on Taji. Not better or worse – just different. We have a different expectation on standards and discipline. It’s a mindset that exists in

units charged with closing with and destroying those that oppose us. When we get back to Fort Hood, I will make playing sports a priority during our regeneration phase – and you’ll be able to wear whatever you want to on your off time to wherever you want to go.

It takes a special person to make the commitment to serve your country as you have. I continue to appreciate it – as does the nation.

Colonel Jim Pasquarette  
Raider 6

# CLP is the only authorized lubricant

—(continued from page 3) the round or even stop firing. Not a good thing in the middle of a firefight. Parts of the regulator to pay special attention to are the vent hole, the central hole at the end of the regulator and the grooves. Don’t use CLP on the body, gas block or collar. Keep it clean and dry.

Next, clean the gas cylinder and piston, again with the scraper tool. Clean the front interior, the internal and external grooves, and the large hole at the end of the piston. Don’t use CLP on the interior of the gas cylinder, piston or the face of the bolt.

Everything else gets a good cleaning like any other weapon system. Don’t forget to do your PMCS while you’re cleaning the SAW. Broken parts? Worn sear? Report them and follow-up with the company’s armorer.

Wipe dirt, carbon and other little nasties from your weapon after cleaning but before lubricating. Putting CLP on top of dirt will only get you the best lubed, poorest functioning and dirtiest weapon in the AO. You may as well do Flutter Kicks. You’ll get better results. All right, your weapon’s clean and you’re ready to lube it.

First of all, use a light coat of Type 2 CLP. Don’t even think about using something else you might’ve seen advertised in the Army Times or Soldier of Fortune magazine. And never mix CLP with other cleaning lubricants. Oh, go ahead and use WD-40 on your weapon; and experience firsthand the quickest ass-whooping in recorded history. Remember, if you would’ve properly lubed your weapon in the first place little Tulip, you wouldn’t be tempted

to resort to extreme measures. Proper lubing of your SAW actually makes it easier to clean.

Protect your ammo from direct sunlight. The FM says “Excessive heat may cause premature detonation!” And the Iraqis say the summers here get hot enough to melt steel. My advice: don’t test this theory. And another thing, quit using oil to clean your rusty-ass ammo. It’ll only attract more dirt and sand and double your problems. Turn the stuff in and get issued another belt. And this time, take better care of your ammo. Keep it out of the weather as much as possible, brush off the dirt and wipe it clean.

Your SAW’s now ready for it’s Pre-Combat Inspection. Your weapon and your battle buddy are your best friends. Treat them right and they’ll reciprocate.



# Iraqi soldiers become engineers

By Spc. C. Terrell Turner  
*Staff Writer*

**A**s the Iraqi army grows in numbers and increased readiness, soldiers continue to become more prepared to handle the diverse missions they will face in the battle against anti-Iraqi forces and terrorists.

More than 50 Iraqi army soldiers recently graduated from the Iraqi Army Engineering School in Taji. In a ceremony at the Taji Cinema, the soldiers received their diplomas and listened to words of encouragement from the deputy school commander



U.S. Army photo by Spc. C. Terrell Turner

**Capt. Matt Keith, operations advisor, CMATT, hands-out a diploma to a graduate of the Iraqi Army Engineering School at the Taji Cinema, March 30. More than 50 soldiers successfully graduated.**

and the chief of training.

An all-Iraqi cadre taught the advanced individual training classes for the new soldiers while Coalition forces took a back seat in an advisory role during the

training process.

"At this point we are only assisting," said Capt. Matt Keith, operations officer advisor, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team, 5th Engineer

Battalion. "Right now, we are working to develop Iraqi staff positions, which are new to their army."

Keith also helps develop training schedules for Iraqi trainees, units coming and going to and from the school and the tasks, conditions and standards for training the Iraqi soldiers. This is the fifth class Keith has seen go through the training since he arrived in December. After handing out diplomas, he spoke to the Iraqi soldiers and thanked them for the opportunity of letting him help them in their training.

About 50 Iraqi instructors teach the trainees in two phases. The *(go to page 10, engineers)*

# Santiago assumes command of Alpha

By Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt  
*Editor, Raider Review*

**A** 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division company held a Change of Command Ceremony on Camp Taji, Iraq, April 3.

Capt. Juan Santiago assumed command of Battery A, 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment as outgoing commander Capt. now Maj. Kevin Robinson was promoted immediately following the ceremony.

"This battery has honed their skills

from the hills of Texas to the desert of California as they brought the fight to Iraq," said Robinson. "I wish you well Captain Santiago as you command the battery."

Santiago began his military career when he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 2001 after graduating from the University of North Alabama with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Political Science and Spanish. He has served in a variety of assignments to include a troop fire support officer, platoon leader and assistant information operations officer. Also, he is a Operation Iraqi Freedom I veteran.

"I want to take this opportunity to



U.S. Army photo by Maj. David Olson

**Capt. Juan Santiago, commander for Btry. A, 4th Bn., 42nd FA Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., salutes 1st Sgt. Ervin Woodard, first sergeant for the battery at a change of command ceremony, April 3.**

thank Colonel [James] Pasqualette and Lieutenant Colonel [Craig] Newman for allowing me to command this battery," Santiago added.

# 'Regulars' continue to make a big difference south of Iraqi capital

By 1st Lt. Dahbry Streets  
2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

**D**eeds, not words," is the motto of the Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

Task Force members know to hold these words near and dear to their hearts and trust in the motto. Soldiers of 1st Bn., 22nd Inf., also known as the Regulars, embody this motto through selfless actions everyday.

While on patrol in the Al Rashid District of southern Baghdad in early March, 3rd Platoon, Company D, assisted a group of local Iraqi citizens in repairing a water main that ruptured, severely flooding the neighborhood. Traveling along the flooded street, the Regulars saw local civilians digging. They immediately secured their pioneer kits and proceeded to help restore water to the neighborhood.

While on patrol just south of the Al Rashid District recently, Soldiers from the Scout platoon, "saw two gentlemen



U.S. Army photo Capt. Jared Rudacille

**Staff Sgt. Anthony Venetz and Sgt. Stephen Holderby, both of Co. D, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., hook-up a disabled truck to their Bradley Fighting Vehicle while assisting Iraqi nationals by pulling their stuck vehicle out of a crater.**

standing next to a van that slid off of the road," said 1st Lt. Brian Johnson, platoon leader. "The platoon felt obliged to help the stranded Iraqis in need of assistance."

After finally conveying a message of peace and assistance to the men, the Regulars used their towing assets to recover the van.

"Ultimately, doing something small, even

helping pull a person's car out of the mud, shows the people of this country the good nature of American troops," said 2nd Lt. James Stephen.

In another act of kindness, members of the Regulars found other Iraqi citizens in need.

During a routine patrol in Hawr Rejab, the headquarters element of Co. D came across an Iraqi

cargo truck that fell into a crater caused by a roadside bomb. After seeing that traffic could not pass, the element formulated a plan to help recover the truck.

As the residents of Hawr Rejab looked on, Staff Sgt. Anthony Venetz and Sgt. Stephen Holderby carefully located tow hooks on the cargo truck and hooked the tow strap to one of the Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

After the first attempt of pulling the massive truck out failed, the two Soldiers devised another plan. By attaching another tow cable directly to the axle, the Soldiers skillfully began pulling the huge truck out of the crater with the Bradley. Slowly, the truck was pulled out of the crater.

"This selfless action performed by Soldiers from Co. D, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf., not only assisted the local national in his delivery of cargo, but also displayed to the people of Hawr Rejab the concern Coalition Forces have for citizens of Iraq," said Capt. Jared Rudacille, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. The people of Hawr Rejab saw first-hand the versatility of the Regulars – one minute conducting a combat patrol and the next minute assisting a trucker in need.



# 1/9th IA Div., 1st BCT conducts medical operation for 375 Iraqis

By Maj. David Olson  
*1st BCT PAO*

As the security operation to protect the citizens in the city of Tarmiya, Iraq, continues, the Tarmiya Qada [city council], the 1st Mechanized Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mech.) and the Iraqi Police Service conducted a medical operation supported by elements of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division and hosted by the Tarmiya medical clinic north of Baghdad, March 30.

The eight civilian Iraqi medical professionals from the Tarmiya medical clinic plus two American care providers from the 1st BCT rendered medical care to 375 patients in 3.5-hour period, while the Iraqi army and Iraqi police provided security for the event.

"Great things are happening here. This plan was put out in the Qada meeting," said Sheik Saeed Jassim Hameed Al-Mashadani, the Qada leader. "I have a good feeling [about the medical operation] today, because



*U.S. Army photo by Maj. David Olson*

**A small child is treated at the medical operations in the Tarmiya, Iraq, medical clinic by an Iraqi doctor, March 27. An estimated 375 citizens of Tarmiya received free medical treatment by eight civilian Iraqi doctors and two American military primary care providers from 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.**

the people get free medical attention."

"We have a good relationship with Coalition forces," added Jassim. "I have a good relationship with Lt. Col. [Rocky] Kmiecik [commander of 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 1st BCT] and Col. [James] Pasquarette [commander of 1st BCT]. I also work with Brig. Gen. Kassim [commander of 1st Mech. Bde., 9th IA Div.]."

"We saw many different ailments today," said Capt. Aixa Espinosa, a

neurologist from Puerto Rico and assigned to Company C, 4th Support Bn., 1st BCT.

The civil affairs team from 1st BCT brought \$4,000 worth of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals for the medical operation in addition to blankets for the families and toys for the children.

"The medical supplies were donated by different groups in the United States," said Maj. Herb Joliat, the civil military

operations officer for 1st BCT, who hails from Bangor, Maine. "What supplies and medicine were not used during the medical operation we donated to the Tarmiya medical clinic."

Everyone left the medical clinic happier than when they arrived, because they received the medicine they needed for their ailments, blankets for warmth, toys for the kids or strength to carry on knowing that the security situation is improving and the living conditions in the community are getting better.

The Iraqi police also promoted a recruitment campaign during the event to increase the size of their force.

There is a real need for more police officers to conduct law enforcement duties in the city to maintain a safe and secure environment for its citizens.

"The people are now happier with the security situation. What's next is making the medical center bigger," Sheik Jassim continued enthusiastically. "We'll add an operating room and a birthing room. We are also resurfacing roads in addition to other projects."



# Interpreters: Representing the best of this Iraqi generation

By Capt. Douglas Wilbur  
4th Bn., 42nd FA Regt.

**T**he Straight Arrows of 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division work hard to defend Camp Taji, but they do not work alone, their Iraqi interpreters are always nearby to assist them when they have contact with locals.

Iraqis working as interpreters for the Coalition forces have a very dangerous, but a very vital job to play in the nations reconstruction effort. These brave men and women sometimes see as much danger on a daily basis as the Iraqi police and the Iraqi army soldiers. As a result, many have been bravely martyred in the great struggle to bring lasting peace and democracy to Iraq.

The interpreters serve as the critical link between the local nationals and the coalition. Their primary mission is to translate languages, but they also translate cultures. This valuable service helps to reduce tension inherent with



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Douglas Wilbur

**An interpreter who works at Camp Taji, helps Iraqi and Coalition forces by directing traffic at Gunner Gate on Camp Taji. The interpreters not only translate languages, but cultures.**

many interactions between Soldiers and local nationals in stressful situations unavoidable in combat. The actions of the interpreters prevent many hostile incidents between the coalition and locals who may feel threatened and revert to violence under normal circumstances. The peaceful resolution of conflicts are not only preferable, but essential to democracy.

For the Coalition Soldiers serving in Iraq, the interpreters often become friends as they share the daily hardships. These experiences lead to close bonds of trust between the Soldiers and the interpreters that only

develop through time. For many Soldiers, the interpreter is the one Iraqi they will remember the most and learn the most from. Many Soldiers have never been to the Middle East before and find Iraqi culture and customs confusing. The interpreters help Soldiers understand these cultural customs, which enables them to develop more productive and respectful relationships with local nationals.

The learning exchange between Soldiers and interpreters is a mutually beneficial exchange. The interpreters have the most diverse and extensive exposures to Americans and learn a lot about

American culture in the process. To Iraqis, American customs and beliefs can seem very confusing as the Soldiers are usually the only Americans they have met. Most of their perceptions about Americans are formed by exposure to movies and TV, which are not always accurate portrayals as they are designed for entertainment, not education. The translators fill a critical role, by helping local nationals to understand the American Soldiers they encounter and dispel common misperceptions.

One interpreter who works for the Straight Arrows goes by the name George. That is not his real name, but a call sign used to protect his identity and make it easier for Soldiers to talk about him. He has several other family members who work as interpreters throughout Iraq as they were all required to study the English language growing up. Like many other interpreters, he is educated with a college degree. George represents some of the best of his generation, who will lead Iraq's transformation into a (go to page 13, many) —

# Coalition, Tarmiya leaders highlight improvement projects

By Spc. Karl Johnson  
363rd MPAD

City council members and Multi-National Division – Baghdad leaders conducted a combined press conference in Tarmiya April 6 to discuss security concerns and improvement projects within the city.

Members of local Iraqi media organizations were present to ask questions during the conference while Iraqi security forces patrolled the streets outside the building.

“We have set a temporary patrol base inside the city, and we have done this to better support and



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Karl Johnson

Sheik Saeed Jassim leads members of the Tarmiya City Council to a combined press conference at a youth center in Tarmiya, April 6.

maintain the security of the people of Tarmiya,” said Lt. Col. Rocky Kmiecik, commander, 1st Battalion,

66th Armored Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. (go to page 12, temporary)

## Engineers now ready to join the fight

— (continued from page 6)

first part is basic engineering for three weeks. The second, four-week phase breaks down the training into specific engineering areas: field or combat engineering, equipment engineering, and construction engineering. Combat engineers handle minefield operations, route clearances, convoys and engagement area development. Equipment engineers maintain and operate equipment engineers need for the job. Construction engineers

learn basic construction techniques, carpentry, plumbing, electrician basics and masonry.

“I like teaching the students,” said Sgt. Maj. Shaker Hamed, field engineer instructor. “They tell me they like my classes and lectures and get a lot out of the classes.” Hamed teaches his students general information about mines and medical techniques during the first phase and practical technique training during the second.

Hamed feels the soldiers are making good

progress, but the nature of Iraq’s history creates a disparity in soldier training.

“In my opinion,” he said. “Some soldiers have a little more experience. Some of the new soldiers need a little more to help them catch up to the level of training expertise of the veteran soldiers.”

The Iraqi cadre were trained by the German army in the United Arab Emirates. The CMATT developed a syllabus and worked with the instructors to make sure they were able to teach the classes.

The turbulent state of Iraq from the attempts of terrorists to disrupt the establishment of a government creates a pressing need for the Iraqi army to be prepared to handle missions requiring engineering expertise.

“These guys are pretty motivated to learn new things and do the right thing,” said Keith. “The Iraqi instructors kept pressing their students on the importance of the training; that no one is going to win this war for them except themselves.”

# IA, Coalition team-up for co-op

By Spc. C. Terrell Turner  
Staff Writer

**L**ocal residents of the Rashidiyah, Iraq, farming community just completed a major step in stabilizing and strengthening the agricultural output in their region with the help of the Iraqi army and Coalition forces.

April 6 saw the grand opening of a farming co-op facility created by a group of local farmers. The farmers got together and created a business plan to consolidate their resources for the benefit of the entire community.

The new facility provides local farmers with tractors, various types of plows, fertilizer and seeds, "in order to lower costs, increase production and improve the agricultural situation in this area," said Capt. Wendy Weinell, civil affairs team leader, Company A, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. C. Terrell Turner

**Lt. Col. Rocky Kmiciek, commander of 1st Bn., 66th AR, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., talks with a local sheik as they sit in the new farmers co-op facility in Rashidiya, Iraq. Over 200 farmers put together their resources to form the co-op and elect a board of directors. The facility will provide the farmers with tractors, plows, fertilizer and seeds.**

The project began about 18-months ago, with the assistance of a local sheik and the Qada, or local governance. The co-op will provide agriculture support to approximately 3,000 acres of local farmland in the Husseniya, Rashidiyah and Sheiksad

areas. Currently, the region produces a variety of fruit and vegetables to include date palms, citrus plants, okra, tomatoes, corn and cucumbers.

Future plans include expanding the facility to provide support for 6,000 square acres, Weinell said.

Iraqi army soldiers and Iraqi police worked along side Coalition forces providing security for the event.

"Over 200-members signed on to be a part of the co-op after an initial election," said Weinell. "There's a board of directors of which Sheik Mohan [Talkani] is the current chairman. He's worked with Coalition forces since we first got here and was instrumental in making the co-op happen."

Lt. Col. Rocky Kmiciek, commander of 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade (go to page 13, Rashidiyah)



U.S. Army photo by Spc. C. Terrell Turner

**Commander interviewed...** Col. James Pasquarette was interviewed by NPR radio personality J.J. Sutherland in the brigade TOC, April 9.



# Temporary patrol base set-up inside Tarmiya to keep city safe, secure

*Press conference highlights IA, U.S. working together*

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“It is our goal to secure and safeguard them and make sure they have a safe environment to live in.”

MND-B Soldiers moved in to the area surrounding the town and began securing the region in late March. Their first priority was to eliminate any terrorists operating in the area. After several weeks of continuous operations, they have seen signs of achieving that goal, said Kmiecik.

“As the joint patrols and operations in this area have been going on, it has been generally quiet,” said Staff Sgt. Christopher Wright, 1st Bn, 66th AR. “We are trying to restore order to the city, and we’re trying to make it a safer place.”

Even though the effort is still on-going, city council members and coalition leaders have forged ahead and begun several reconstruction projects aimed at raising the quality of life for the local citizens.

“The council has had the Coalition forces give contracts out for the improvement of the local hospital, which will add a new birthing room and an operating room,” said



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Karl Johnson

**Lt. Col. Rocky Kmiecik (left), commander, 1st Bn., 66th AR, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., and Sheik Saeed Jassim, the leader of the Tarmiya city council, answer questions about the security situation, civil improvements to the city and how the council, the Iraqi army and Coalition forces are helping local farmers with a co-op during a press conference to the Arab media, April 6.**

Kmiecik.

In addition to this major health care initiative, local leaders have scheduled other projects designed to improve the overall quality of life for residents of the Tarmiya community, said Sheik Saeed Jassim, a member of the city council. This includes making improvements to the town’s roadways, cleaning-up pollution and adding the facility to provide more clean drinking water for the citizens of Tarmiya as well as providing healthy

recreational opportunities for its youth.

At the conclusion of the

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***"It is our goal to secure and safeguard them and make sure they have a safe environment to live in." - Lt. Col. Rocky Kmiecik***

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conference, members of the Iraqi media were invited to observe some of the improvements already underway. At the local

health clinic, the press representatives were shown the future site of the upcoming surgical and birthing wing being added to the medical facility.

Just minutes away from that site, they were shown an improved youth center.

“The people of Tarmiya are good and honest people,” said Kmiecik. “It is only through the help of the people – not only in this city, but the people throughout Iraq – that we can defeat this insurgency and the terrorists.”

# Rashidiyah farmers receive tractors, feed

—(continued from page 11)

Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division sat down with Sheik Mohan and several board members who came to the grand opening ceremony. After the ceremony, Kmiecik walked around the facility with local farmers on a guided tour by one of the board members involved in the project.

For one local man, the co-op is a hands-on opportunity to help the community.

"I used to be a security guard at a local power plant," said Mohammed Waleed. "Eight months ago when the project was approved, I signed up to be



U.S. Army photo by Spc. C. Terrell Turner

**These tractors were provided with coalition funds as part of the building of a local farming co-op in the Rashidiya area. The co-op will provide support to approximately 3,000 acres in the region.**

the caretaker. Because they knew I was a good guard, they appointed me here."

Waleed, who lives nearby, also helped in the construction of the facility.

"He [Waleed] would point out deficiencies to me that he felt I should know about," said Weinell.

Local farmer, Adnan Najeen, 56, says he has

been a farmer since he was born and sees this new building as a way to bring more opportunities to the area. He remembers the area the facility was built on as bare ground, sitting in front of a water tower next to greenhouses built in the '70s for plants grown during the year.

"This has been a very successful project that will provide us with fertilizer and seeds," he said. "All the farmers will benefit as it raises the living standard of all the farmers. This will be a much easier time for us than in the time of former President Saddam Hussein."

# Many interpreters fight alongside Iraqis

—(continued from page 9)

thriving democracy. Although he is well paid, he does not do this job for the money. As he says, "this is a terrific way to participate in the freedom and improvement of my country."

George regularly braves the danger of improvised explosive devices and terrorists' attacks helping the Straight Arrows to keep MSR Tampa safe and keep the anti-Iraqi forces off of the camp. He has seen intense combat in the past, especially when he worked as an interpreter for the

U.S. Marines, training the Iraqi Security Forces. One day while he was traveling to Fallujah, Iraq, with an Iraqi National Guard Battalion and their Marines trainers, he was ambushed by a sizeable element from the Mahdi militia. During the firefight, one of the Iraqi soldiers next to him was killed. Rather than panic, he acted decisively, by taking his AK-47 and joining the fight against the Mahdi militia, who were soundly defeated soon after.

Another interpreter working for the Straight Arrows goes by the name

Johnny and he lives in Baghdad. Johnny relishes his role as an intermediary between the population and the Coalition Soldiers. Johnny's belief in the Coalition mission is deep, as he states, "I had members of my family killed by Saddam's Regime and I hate everything it stood for."

Johnny, like many other interpreters, takes great effort to ensure his personal safety on and off duty. On duty he wears a mask to hide his facial features and never discloses his name or family identity. Off duty, he

does not tell people who he works for, and he carries an AK-47 to dissuade would be kidnappers.

The actions of the interpreters make the success of the coalition's mission possible. Whether they help the Military Transition Team translate lessons for Iraqi army soldiers or motorists at a checkpoint, they make the mission happen despite the risks. Their role may be low profile, but it is absolutely essential and they will take their place in the history of this ancient country.



# Project gives power to the Iraqi people

(continued from page 1)

Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. “We assisted them with funding and contracted the contractors from Baghdad to do the job. This is a great step for the council. They planned it out and we helped them execute.”

The construction, paid for by U.S. Coalition Forces Community Emergency Relief Program funds, allowed towers and lines to be attached to local transformers, and broadened the scope and effectiveness of the local electrical service network for locals in the area.

“As power generation increases you’ll really see a benefit. It’s already made a huge improvement,” said Blanding. “Previously they [the residents] were four-hours on and six-hours off. Now, they should be eight-hours on and four-hours off and should see 24-hour service here soon.”

For each successful project, another piece of freedom falls into place for the Iraqi people. Constant diplomatic efforts between the council and local villagers are the key that Blanding sees to making these projects successful.

“The council was a key player in getting permission from the Iraqi government to execute the project. If they don’t do that then it doesn’t happen,” he said. “Making sure everybody understands what’s happening is very important. These projects help provide a legitimate face to local Iraqi governances and help provide legitimacy to that local guy who is going to be voting for that council. It sees the Iraqi leaders taking responsibility and credit for something they did and their people see that.”



U.S. Army photo by Spc. C. Terrell Turner

**Lt. Col. Dave Thompson, commander, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. sits next to Col. Jamal, commander of 2nd Bde., 9th Iraqi Army Div. and a local councilman to receive questions from local nationals after the grand opening of the Abu Jedial Electrical Project on March 29. The project increased the efficiency of the local electrical grid.**

In a show of solidarity and gratitude, the Nahia invited Lt. Col. Dave Thompson, the commander of 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav., to speak at the grand opening ceremony. Col. Jamal, commander of the 2nd Bde., 9th Iraqi Army Div., was also on hand to speak to locals and address the concerns of the council members and concerned citizens.

“The Iraqi people and Iraqi Security forces want a better Iraq,” said Thompson. “Our role is beginning to change from leaders of projects, to more or less of a partnership role where we let Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi governance and the Iraqi people take the lead. We’re there to facilitate and help.”

“First of all we are thankful for the civil affairs teams help in executing this program,” said Chairman Mohammed, leader of the North Khadimiya Nahia. “The other council members are proud of the program to

bring electricity to the people. Before when we didn’t have power, we had to use sticks to run lines and tap into other lines and disrupt other systems.”

With each success, both sides realize there is still a long way to go in making Iraq self-sufficient.

“We’re not just distributing electricity. We’re promoting the safety and security of the Iraqi people and that’s really what it’s all about,” said Thompson. “I couldn’t be prouder of the American troopers and Iraqi army that are out here doing their job every single day enduring incredible hardships and dangers to ensure the Iraqi people have some safety and security and a chance at freedom.”

“It’s very good. Before we didn’t see a lot of Iraqi army in the neighborhoods, now we see them everyday,” said Mohammed. “God willing, we will all work together: the Iraqi army and Coalition forces to make Iraq safer.”